

Message Text

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43/41

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCA-01 VO-03 CPR-01 SS-15 NSC-05 SAJ-01

L-02 INSE-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01

IO-10 /059 W

----- 098912

R 171305Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6274

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

:USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 4026

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 1)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, PFOR,UR,US

SUBJECT: SOVIET COMPLAINT ON DULLES AIRPORT CUSTOMS PROCEDURES

REF: STATE 002700

1. OFFICIAL TRAVELERS

A) SOVIET CUSTOMS TREATMENT OF AMERICANS HOLDING DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS HAS BEEN ENTIRELY CORRECT DURING THE PAST YEAR. THERE HAVE BEEN NO SEARCHES, DELAYS OR DISCOURTESIES REPORTED.

B) SINCE MARCH 1974 INCIDENTS INVOLVING DETENTION OF UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE BELONGING TO TWO MARINE GUARDS, (REPORTED MOSCOW'S 6660 AND 7032), THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS IN MOSCOW OF HARRASSMENT OF DELAY OF HOLDERS OF OFFICIAL PASSPORTS, OR THEIR BAGGAGE, ACCOMPANIED OR UNACCOMPANIED. (SEE LENINGRAD 420 OF MAY 16, 1974, FOR REPORT OF CONFISCATION OF BOOK BELONGING TO HOLDER OF OFFICIAL PASSPORT.)

2. BUSINESSMEN AND CORRESPONDENTS

WHILE AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN RESIDENT IN MOSCOW REPORT NO DIFFICULTIES WITH CUSTOMS, NOT EVEN ROUTINE INSPECTION
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OF BAGGAGE, AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS HAVE RECENTLY RE-

PORTED THE FOLLOWING INCIDENTS:

A) ON SEPTEMBER 14, 1974, A LENINGRAD CUSTOMS OFFICIAL CONFISCATED THE BOOK, "THE JOY OF SEX", BELONGING TO MRS. JAMES JACKSON, WIFE OF THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE CORRESPONDENT RESIDENT IN MOSCOW, AS SHE WAS ENTERING THE COUNTRY.

B) ON DECEMBER 18, 1974, A CUSTOMS OFFICIAL AT SHEREMETYEVO AIRPORT INSPECTED THE BAGGAGE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR CORRESPONDENT ELIZABETH POND, OPENED HER PERSONAL LETTERS, READ THEM AND THEN RETURNED THEM TO HER PRIOR TO HER DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNTRY.

C) ON JANUARY 4, 1975, NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT JAMES CLARITY HAD HIS BAGS SEARCHED FOR APPROXIMATELY 90 MINUTES ON HIS ARRIVAL AT SHEREMETYEVO AIRPORT NO. 1. CUSTOMS OFFICIALS SEIZED A SHEAF OF NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLES ON THE SOVIET UNION AND THE FOLLOWING BOOKS: MICHEL TATU'S "POWER IN THE SOVIET UNION", SOLZHENITSYN'S "GULAG ARCHIPELAGO", MEDVEDEV'S "LET HISTORY JUDGE", A VOLUME OF KRUSHCHEV'S MEMOIRS AND A BOOK BY PYOTR YAKIR.

3. TOURISTS AND PRIVATE VISITORS

EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED FEW COMPLAINTS IN RECENT MONTHS ABOUT SOVIET CUSTOMS PRACTICES FROM TOURISTS AND PRIVATE VISITORS. CONSULAR FILES REFLECT FEWER CASES IN 1974 THAN IN 1973. SOVIET CUSTOMS HAVE BEEN GENERALLY CORRECT AND CORDIAL WITH TOURISTS AND PRIVATE VISITORS, AND COOPERATE IN RESOLVING CASES WHICH ARISE. SEPARATE TELGRAM FOLLOWS PROVIDING SPECIFICS OF RECENT CUSTOMS CASES WHICH HAVE COME TO ATTENTION OF CONSULAR SECTION.

4. OFFICIAL SHIPMENTS

EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE TO EXPAND REPLY TO REVIEW DIFFICULTIES AND DELAYS EMBASSY AND CONGEN LENINGRAD EXPERIENCE IN SENDING AND RECEIVING OFFICIAL SHIPMENTS. (REF LENINGRAD'S 1249, 1250 AND 18). THESE DIFFICULTIES ARE OFTEN NOT DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO SOVIET CUSTOMS BUT RATHER TO MELANGE OF PROBLEMS WHICH ARISE FROM DEALING WITH VARIOUS SOVIET BUREAUCRACIES INVOLVED SUCH AS THE RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION, AIRPORT AUTHORITIES, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UPDK, OR UPIP AND BORDER GUARDS. RAISING THESE ISSUES IN CONTEXT OF REPLY TO SOVIET COMPLAINT OF INSPECTION OF ACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE MIGHT INVITE RETALIATION IN SOVIET UNION BY CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES IN AREA WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN METICULOUSLY CORRECT, NAMELY, FACILITATING ENTRY OF ACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE BY HOLDERS OF DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CUSTOMS INSPECTIONS, TRAVEL CONTROLS, DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MOSCOW00694
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750021-0547, D750019-0289
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750142/aaaablbk.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 002700
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <23 OCT 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET COMPLAINT ON DULLES AIRPORT CUSTOMS PROCEDURES
TAGS: OGEN, PFOR, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006